GT 1-29-94

UNDUE INFLUENCE?

Private organization shouldn't set city's agenda

Focus on the Family has taken a decidedly un-Christian position on the matter of health benefits for members of city workers' families ("Focus condemns city health benefits plan," Metro, Jan. 24). This new proposal has the potential of benefiting hundreds while injuring no one. From the parent of a worker who's not yet eligible for Social Security and can't work for whatever reason, to the adult child returning home due to unemployment, domestic abuse or illness, as well as domestic partners.

When the domestic partner benefit was first introduced to the city employees benefit package only 11 individuals took advantage of this provision. This new broader proposal has the potential to benefit a great many more without costing the city taxpayers a penny, because the city employee would be required to pay 100 percent of the insurance premium.

When you consider that Focus on the Family does not pay a penny in property tax you wonder why its input is even considered. Because it affects the health benefit package of city workers, I think it's an employee issue. Therefore, it is their opinions that should hold the greatest sway in the City Council's final decision on this matter.

I'm a city employee of 25 years, married, with two grown children (contributing taxpayers) and three grandchildren. I will derive no benefit from this new proposal but I fully endorse it. It will broaden our insurance pool; it will provide affordable health care insurance for a few more who might otherwise go uncovered; it's compassionate, it's Christian and it's just the right thing to do.

I can only hope that Councilman Randy Purvis has the courage to stand up and say that closed-minded, non-taxpaying groups like Focus on the Family do not run this City Council.

Dennis Delahoy
Colorado Springs

Benefits policy should be based solely on the merits

Is it really true that our elected officials have become so influenced by an organization like Focus on the Family that we can no longer expect them to implement our public policy based solely on the merits? If the recent Gazette story is any indication of Focus' control in the public arena, then Christians and non-Christians alike had better take heed of the theocracy to come.

The news report described Focus' four-page letter in opposition to expanding the scope of who's eligible to receive city health benefits as delivering "a potentially fatal blow" to the plan and council members Jerry Heimlicher and Margaret Radford acknowledged that Focus' position on the issue has essentially scuttled the whole idea.

I don't recall having the option of casting a vote for either Focus Chairman James Dobson or Vice President Tom Minnery in the last election. Focus, of course, should have its say just like everybody else. I hope our City Council has the fortitude to ensure that its say is no more important than yours or mine.

Steven Mahone
Colorado Springs

TORY SO FAR: On the
k to the farm after
racing triumph, Mr.
points out to Ben that
matter only with rac-
s — not with people.
ey approach the farm,
the barn on fire.

rennan punched 9-1-1
ell phone as the truck
up the driveway,
gravel. "Wind Rider
ff Route 41 — barn
man yelled into the
s eyes on the barn.
uckled his seat belt
both hands on the
dle, ready to jump
didn't know what he
to do, but he knew
e horses in that barn
he would do anything
he kindness this man
n him.
me!" Brennan said.
oth leaped from the
hit the ground run-
could smell the fire
the sound of horses
grew louder by the
or an instant, they
od in the doorway:
em, the hayloft was
Sparks and glowing
were falling into the
sle, and the horses
king and jumping in
s.
can't take them
into the paddock,
ver go beneath the
nnan said. He looked
s face a mask of anxi-
open the doors and
orses out. Slap them,
em, make them run
ay. We'll worry about
hem later."
g, Ben ran into the
hind Brennan and
e nearest stall door.
t out!" he yelled, wav-
ms at the black mare
he reared, hooves
he air, then tried to turn into the corner of th
stall. Flapping his arms an
yelling wildly, Ben dodged i
and got between her and th
back wall.

She took one look at the fir
and bolted for the open doo
From across the aisle, anothe
horse burst out, eyes wide wit
terror. Ben fumbled with th
metal bolt on the door of th
next stall, but his hands wer
slippery with sweat and shak
ing. The crackling and hissin
above made his knees weak. A
last he slid the bolt open, an
as soon as he swung the doo
wide the horse bounded ou
and made for freedom.

If Ben ever had wondered
he was a firebug, he now kne
he wasn't. He hated this fir
hated the roaring voice of i
the embers that rained dow
onto his head and singed hi
hair and skin. The horse in th
next stall was screaming, turn
ing in tight circles in a pani
The thought went throug

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